

transparencies

Mission Theological Advisory Group

# transparencies

pictures of mission through prayer and reflection –  
an accompaniment to *Presence and Prophecy*

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# contents

members of the Mission Theological Advisory Group	vii
preface	ix
acknowledgements	xi
copyright acknowledgements	xii
introduction	xiii
some ways of using this material	xv
chapter 1 vision – Douglas Coupland, <i>Girlfriend in a Coma</i>	1
chapter 2 sacrifice – J. K. Rowling, the <i>Harry Potter</i> novels	8
chapter 3 praise – the hymns of Isaac Watts	14
chapter 4 hope – Sister Wendy Beckett, <i>The Gaze of Love</i>	19
chapter 5 the cross – Jonathan Clarke, <i>Christ on the Cross</i>	25
chapter 6 evil – Judges 19–21	30
chapter 7 absence – R. S. Thomas, 'The moon in Lleyn'	37
chapter 8 loss – Barbara Kingsolver, <i>The Poisonwood Bible</i>	42
chapter 9 desire – the Bluewater shopping centre, Kent	48
chapter 10 transformation – <i>The Muppets' Christmas Carol</i>	54
notes	60

## chapter 6

## evil



Susan White,  
Woman  
oppressed,  
Gosford sand-  
stone, 1989.

In this reflection, we used a disturbing and difficult Bible story to think about the presence of evil in the world and our reactions to it.

**prayer**

Compassionate God,  
you weep for the suffering in your creation;  
you see injustice, cruelty and evil.  
Help us not to hide our faces from this pain,  
but seek to hold and heal all who cry for help.  
Amen.

**theological reflection**

Judges 19–21: a story of abuse and terror.

In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite, residing in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. But his concubine became angry with him, and she went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there some four months. Then her husband set out after her, to speak tenderly to her and bring her back . . .

While they were enjoying themselves, the men of the city, a perverse lot, surrounded the house and started pounding on the door. They said to the old man, the master of the house, 'Bring out the man who came into your house, so that we may have intercourse with him.' And the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, 'No, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Since this man is my guest, do not do this vile thing. Here are my virgin daughter and his concubine; let me bring them out now. Ravish them and do whatever you want to them; but against this man do not do such a vile thing.' But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine, and put her out to them. They wantonly raped her, and abused her all through the night until the morning. And as the dawn began to break, they let her go. As morning appeared, the woman came and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, until it was light.

In the morning her master got up, opened the doors of the house, and when he went to go on his way, there was the concubine lying at the door of the house, with her hands on the threshold. 'Get up,' he said to her, 'we are going.' But there was no answer. Then he put her on the donkey; and the man set out for his home. When he had entered his house, he took a knife, and grasping his concubine he cut her in twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

This is the story of an owned woman who only ever commits one action under her own control, that is, to run home, away from her owner, the Levite. After this, she is entirely under the control of others, who deal with her as a piece of property and, in the end, rape her to death. It is clear that her father does not want to relinquish her back into the hands of the Levite, but his rights over his daughter will only allow him